Haiti - A Natural Disaster?

DIRECTIONS

Read the following news story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions.

STORY

**Island Nation of Haiti Reels After Earthquake Causes 'Enormous' Damage**

01/13/2010

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/jan-june10/haiti_01-13.html>

Questions using the text

1. **What happened in Haiti January 12, 2010?**

A: In Haiti, January 12, 2010, around 5pm a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit, resulting in concrete building collapsing, people being killed due to fall down of materials and some say that the earthquake was so strong that it could be felt in Cuba, which is 200 miles away. The earthquake was about 15km away from Port-Au-Prince. It was established that about 230000 people died and they were still counting.

1. **Why did so many buildings collapse?**

A: So many building collapsed because (1) Haiti is a poor country, so they do not have a lot of building material (2) Haiti is very populated, so the housing structure was built poorly for the people to have shelter (3) Because the earthquake hit so close to the buildings, instead of being deeper down in the earth, it shook them harder causing them to collapse (4) Due to political problem, as well, the buildings were built unsafe under normal circumstances, so it would be even more dangerous during an earthquake.

1. **What is the relationship between Haiti and the United States?**

A: The United States has been helping Haiti for a long time with their problems in commercially, politically and militarily ways.

1. **How can Americans help the situation in Haiti?**

A: Americans can help the situation of Haiti by sending out their many militaries to keep order going in Haiti, since many police stations may have collapsed too, and also their military for hospitality help so that injured can be helped and people can be rescued. Also their many organizations could help bringing in the necessities.

1. **What happened in Haiti in 1804?**

A: The nation of Haiti was created in this time, due to the first ever successful black slave rebellion. The rebellion was led by Jean-Jacques Dessalines and they drove France out of Haiti. However problems soon started as civil wars broke out.

1. **Who was “Papa Doc?”**

A: Papa Doc, aka Francois Duvalier, was a man who in 1957 brutally overtook power of Haiti and his way of keeping order was to kill and/or torture anyone who was against him and his actions. Thousands of people were killed when Papa Doc and later Baby Doc, who was Francois’ son, named Jean-Claude Duvalier, ruled.

1. **Who was Jean Bertrand Aristide?**

A: Jean Bertrand Aristide was elected as president in 1990, by the Haitians, however only ruling for a year before being overthrown by military dictatorship in 1991, resulting in thousands of Haitians escaping in unsafe boats towards Florida in order to get away. The United States, in 1994, sent their troops to Haiti for Aristide to come back to power and was successfully re-elected to president in 2000. Later he was accused of corruptions, which weakened him as president, and in 2004 the U.S. Marine Corps flew him back to Central African Republic.

1. **What is the Gonave microplate?**

A: The Gonave Microplate is a small plate that is found between the North American plate and the Caribbean plate. It is only a small sliver of the earth’s crust.

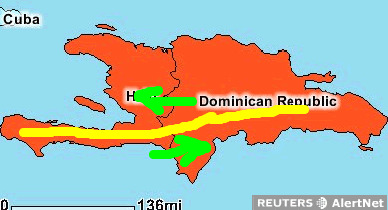
**Extended Tasks**

1. **Watch the Video and then explain exactly the causes of the Earthquake in Port au Prince. You can add any images you can find.**

This shows Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

A: The causes of the earthquake in Haiti was because of the fault line that goes straight across Haiti, and one fault went one way and the other fault went the other way and these two faults slipped which caused the earth to start shaking, causing an earthquake.

Picture source: <http://www.redcross.ca/cmslib/images/HaitiDomin.gif>

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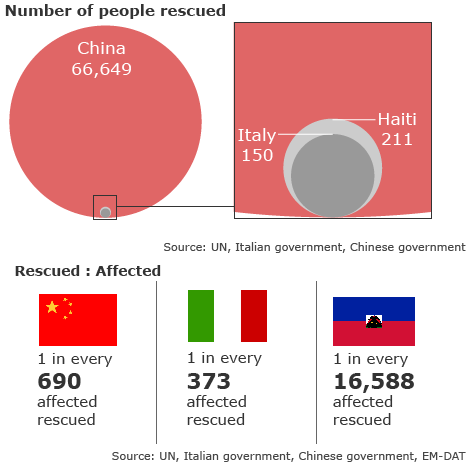
1. **Why Did So many People Die in Haiti?**

A: So many people died because the earthquake was only 6 miles deep, which caused the earth to shake more violently because of how close it was to the surface. This caused buildings to collapse which would then cause people to die. Also the fact that there were about 15 aftershocks to the earthquake, and that they all were still pretty high on the Richter scale and these would cause extra damage.

The yellow line shows the where the fault line was and the green arrows shows the directions which the faults were going in.

**The devastating earthquakes that hit China on 12 May 2008, Italy on 6 April 2009 and Haiti in January 2010 all measured above 6.0 and took many lives. But why was the human cost so much greater for Haiti?**

1. The magnitude of the earthquake was high and the earthquake was close to the surface of the earth so it would hit and shake more violently and rougher due to these points.
2. Haiti is very populated so many people lived really dense, causing everyone to be in the same area and this also took many lives, because if people were more spread out, less people would have died due to less chance of them being hit.
3. 72.1% of Haitians are very poor and lives off of less than 2$ a day and this causes many of them to seek shelter the same places in poor structured houses.
4. Houses were built bad and in a rush, and they were unstable already during a normal day, so the fact that the earthquake hit too made many building collapse because the houses couldn’t resist much. The materials were poor and there were too many people living in them.
5. The worst earthquakes in Haiti hit their capital, Port-Au-Prince, where about 3.5 million people lived, and because of the big amount of people living in this area where the worst shakes struck, then more people would be likely to die.
6. Organizations that were already established in Haiti was also hit, and some buildings were destroyed which made it harder for the organizations to respond since they no longer had a safe environment to be around and help people in.
7. Not a lot of people, due to point #6, were therefore rescued in time before dying, because they wouldn’t be found in time, they would die of starvation or dehydration and/or their injuries were too serious to help. The chart underneath shows the amount of people who were rescued in three earthquakes, including Haiti.



**Use the article below to answer this question in a number of points. You will need to add data to help back up your answer.**

[**http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8510900.stm**](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8510900.stm)

Sources: <http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/01/12/haiti.earthquake/index.html>